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TAGS: [POL](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: PRT DIYALA: INCREASE IN FEMALE SUICIDE BOMBERS
PROMPTS NEW SECURITY MEASURES

REF: BAGHDAD 2048

Classified By: PRT Team Leader George White for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (U) This is a PRT Diyala reporting cable.

Summary

12. (S) The marked increase in the frequency of female suicide bomber attacks in Diyala province in June and July has prompted the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Coalition Forces (CF) to redouble efforts to identify potential bombers and uncover recruiting methods implemented by insurgent groups. Previous to June and July, attacks by women bombers usually occurred every 19 -21 days. With the latest increase, there have been attacks on average every seven to 14 days. The ISF, with CF backing, is preparing to launch awareness campaigns to dissuade women from participating in these attacks. CF have disseminated additional hotlines for those areas with cell coverage in order to provide a conduit for people to report suspicious activity and have taken measures to assist the ISF in doing the same. End Summary.

13. (C) The increasing trend of women suicide bombers in Diyala province in June and early July has prompted the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), with CF assistance, to create new measures intended to reduce the frequency of attacks. The most deadly attack occurred June 22 in the provincial capital Baqubah and killed 16 people and wounded more than 40. The attacker, who was caught on video, detonated her explosive device while standing in the road in front of the Governance Center and the Diyala Appeals Court.

14. (S) Of the 20 attacks in Diyala since February 2007, the ISF have been only able to identify the woman attacker in the June 22 incident. According to Diyala Operations Center (DOC) spokesman COL Ragheb Al Omairi, her name was Wansa Mutliq Ali Al Musami. The ISF believe that her brother killed himself by detonating his own suicide vest while attempting to escape Coalition Forces (CF).

15. (S) Currently, the ISF are attempting to locate another Al Musami sister whom they believe was also preparing herself for a suicide attack in early June. COL Ragheb says the sister is believed to be part of a cell of at least six other women located in the city of Buhriz, which is considered to be a perennial stronghold of Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). This is one of two families the ISF have identified in which sisters are perpetrating suicide vest (SVEST) attacks. They are currently looking for a woman named Khalida Shukr Mahdi who has two sisters who are believed to have carried out suicide attacks.

16. (S) The Provincial Director of Police, GEN Ghanem Al Quraishi, told us that one woman turned herself into the Iraqi Police (IP) instead of carrying out a suicide bombing in Diyala in late June. According to Ghanem, she was held in a safe house for a short period of time, but later returned

to work. She is currently working as a nurse at Baqubah General Hospital. The PRT and partner regiment have requested an interview with the woman to better understand the recruiting process. The IP is considering the request.

17. (S) ISF contacts have told us that women who have lost a brother or husband killed while fighting CF and/or ISF are most vulnerable to recruitment. It is thought that AQI targets these individuals immediately following the death of a male relative while they are most susceptible. The ISF believe women attackers are given just two to three weeks of training, unlike their male colleagues, who typically carry out similar terrorist activities only after undergoing months of extensive training.

18. (S) Orphaned children whose parents were killed while carrying out attacks are also targeted for recruitment. COL Ragheb has shown us a recruiting video for the "Children of Paradise," which encourages orphaned children to take up arms against ISF and CF in order to join their parents in "Paradise." He says the Children of Paradise movement began about a year ago and is believed to be the mastermind of an Amir or Prince of AQI, Jaleel Ibrahim Hachim Al Mujamia, who is based in Diyala. COL Ragheb says ISF has very little information about the movement and is working to learn more about this group.

19. (C) The ISF is developing an awareness campaign to try to reduce the number of female suicide bombings in the province. COL Ragheb says he hopes to establish a 24-hour hotline for people to call in with information about potential attacks or to ask for help if they are being targeted or recruited. He

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says they previously had a tip line established but it was not successful.

Comment

110. (C) With CF assistance, the ISF have begun to address the problem of the increased frequency of women suicide bombers. This includes building ISF investigative capacity to determine what drives women to become willing participants and identifying potential recruits for suicide bombings. However, this is a daunting set of challenges. The thousands of widows, sisters, and children of deceased AQI members comprise a vast and widely dispersed pool for the AQI to tap. The economic hardship and poverty caused by the loss of the male member(s) of their families appears to be a major factor that makes these women susceptible to recruitment. Ultimately, a campaign to reduce or eliminate suicide bombings will require not only better detection procedures, but also an information campaign and attention to alleviating the underlying conditions that make women vulnerable to recruitment. End Comment.
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